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   To maintain the attention of commanders and planners exit strategy considerations should be embedded throughout the operational planning and execution process. This way the questions concerning what the exit strategy is and how it relates to the concept of operations can be continuously and systematically evaluated throughout. Otherwise, exit strategy considerations are too easily buried in the dynamics of planning and executing hostilities.

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EXIT STRATEGY: WHERE DOES IT FIT INTO OPERATIONAL PLANNING?

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Introduction

The new world order has spawned relatively smaller regional conflicts while leaving the U.S. in a dominant position as a world leader. Since U.S. National Security Strategy is one of engagement in order to prevent smaller crises from erupting into larger problems, the challenge of intervening as the world's only superpower includes how to exit the intervention successfully, with desired objectives intact, while not exhausting the limited military resources and manpower available. In contrast, when the U.S. intervened in the two world wars of the twentieth century, the enormity of the task and the goal of unconditional surrender of the enemy narrowed many choices concerning what type of exit strategy to undertake. It is doubtful the U.S. will find itself in that context in the near future.[1]

Since WW II the U.S. has intervened militarily in numerous limited conflicts around the globe with varying intensity, each one conspicuously without a declaration of war. Whether engaged in large-scale military conflict or humanitarian and peace operations, the result is that extra care is taken to balance American public and world opinion against the military expediency in these conflicts. Ideally, conflict resolution is supposed to result in a better peace, which allows U.S. forces to exit at some designated point after hostilities terminate. Many of the post war era conflicts such as Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, and Panama, have not allowed the U.S. military to disengage in a "graceful" manner. For the military to exit the crisis, the political, economic, and informational instruments of power must be able to assume the dominant role.[2] The degree to which this is successful depends greatly on the military strategy used during hostilities. Susan Strednansky sums up this

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[1] Ashly. J. Tellis, "Understanding Exit Strategy and U.S. Involvement in Intrastate Conflicts," Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, (Vol 19, Number 2, 1996), 121.
[2] John R. Boule, "The Operations Transition Planning Cell," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College: Newport RI, 2001), 2.

relationship by saying, "A viable end state, along with a strategy for termination and conflict exit should drive the *ways* and *means* [emphasis mine] for the execution of the intervention."[3] Therefore, exit strategy must be inextricably linked to the intervention decision, not merely planned as an afterthought.

Joint doctrine does not provide an unambiguous definition of the term "exit strategy." Nevertheless, it is commonly used by senior U.S. government and military leaders in their publications and official testimonies. Borrowed from the business world, the term was adopted in 1993 as a description of the disengagement phase of military intervention in foreign policy, especially after the UN withdrawal from Somalia.[4] In joint doctrine publications it is rarely used, although the concept seems to be synonymous with other terms that have widespread use. Terms like "military end state," that is, what the situation looks like when the military is no longer the prominent actor, and "transition" from conflict termination to peace via post-conflict activities relate to exit strategy but do not adequately deal with the subject. One definition offered states that exit strategy is "a plan to remove U.S. combat forces once the end state has been achieved and the military instrument of power can give way to other instruments."[5] Other documents and military service manuals struggle to define what exit strategy actually means in the military context. Michael Gilpin notes, however that "the various definitions share a common theme of establishing clear objectives to achieve an end state, a transition, and then military disengagement. Inherently, exit strategy must be flexible enough to accommodate changes in strategic conditions that

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[3] Susan Strednansky, "Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1996), 2.
[4] Gideon Rose, "The Exit Strategy Delusion," <u>Foreign Affairs</u>, (January/February, 1998) 57.
[5] Strednansky, 4.

subsequently affect goals and objectives."[6] This implies that exit strategy is not interchangeable with terms like end state and transition but encompasses them. Although at first glance exit strategy seems to imply common sense, there are broad implications for the warfighter embedded in the idea.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, exit strategy is the overarching plan relating conflict termination, post-hostility activities, and military disengagement, which contributes to the strategic objective.

 This paper proposes that the United States struggles to formulate successful exit strategies because current joint operational planning guidance fails to properly address this critical aspect of conflict. The paper will attempt to expose existing shortfalls in the joint doctrine and derive recommendations to incorporate exit strategy planning more effectively into the joint publications. The salient points of several case studies are used to examine how a lack of focus on exit strategy can affect the success of U.S. military disengagements, and in some cases, even the extent to which national objectives are accomplished. U.S. intervention in Haiti will serve as a case study that points toward the advantages of planning an exit strategy in conjunction with the rest of the operation. All cases serve to assist in formulating proposals for improvements to the joint planning guidance.

Extant Guidance – Where is it?

Lack of a definition has not prevented the use of "exit strategy" in the joint doctrine. Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, implies that exit strategy is a critical concept in operational art when it asks, "What resources must be committed or actions

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[6] Michael D. Gilpin, "Exit Strategy: The New Dimension in Operational Planning," (Carlisle, PA: Army War College, 1997), 2.

performed to successfully execute the Joint Force Commander's exit strategy?"[7] Yet

information on how to develop and execute an exit strategy is not to be found. Joint Pub 3-0

addresses the importance of conflict termination and post-conflict operations—which are

critical aspects in this study's working definition of an exit strategy—but does not follow

through with guidance for planning and executing. Joint Pub 3-0 does stress the need for

planners to clearly define the end state and consider what is necessary to "end the operation

and the likely period of follow on activities."[8] It also acknowledges the end state should drive

the rest of the planning process. Hence, while the term is not often used, the need for the

ideas surrounding exit strategy is not lacking in Joint Pub 3-0.

Joint Publication 5-0, Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations, similarly explains that a

campaign plan, in part, "clearly defines an end state that constitutes success, failure, mission

termination, or exit strategy; and serves as the basis for subordinate planning."[9] This gives

credence that exit strategy and end state are not synonymous. What Joint Pub 5-0 does not do

is provide meaningful guidance on how to plan in such a manner as to relate the elements of

exit strategy coherently into the planning process.

On the other hand, Joint Pub 5-00.2, Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and

Procedures, has some useful checklists that deal with termination and transition planning, and

even acknowledges that conflict termination and transition planning should extend throughout

the planning process.[10] These checklists items are not found, however, in the Joint

Operational Planning and Execution System (JOPES) manuals that are actually used in

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[7] Joint Chiefs of Staff, <u>Doctrine for Joint Operations</u>, Joint Pub 3-0, (Washington, DC: 10 Sept 2001), II-3.
[8] Ibid., III-2.
[9] Joint Chiefs of Staff, <u>Doctrine for Joint Operations</u>, Joint Pub 5-0 (Washington DC: 13 Apr 1995), II-18.
[10] Joint Chiefs of Staff, <u>, Joint Task Force Planning Guidance Procedures</u>, Joint Publication 5-00.2 (Washington DC: 13 Jan 1999), IX-54-IX-56.

deliberate or crisis action planning.[11] This may cause planners and commanders to overlook some or all elements of exit strategy planning in the heat of a crisis, including the need for particular types of forces in the post-conflict phase. This historically impacts the effectiveness and duration of military force both during and after hostilities. Other areas applicable to transitioning from war to post conflict operations are found in the joint doctrine guidance on military operations other than war (MOOTW) and interagency coordination. There is very thorough discussion about planning involving both of these topics in their respective joint publications. Again, however, these techniques are not referenced in the primary JOPES planning documents.

After examining the joint publications, the significant problem with operational planning guidance appears to be that it does not integrate exit strategy considerations in the forefront of the planning and execution cycles. In other words, where there is guidance, it may be disconnected and not in the most advantageous place for planners to make full use of it, especially during crisis action planning. The publications do not provide a method to reference planners to the appropriate source for planning guidance. As evidenced in the following case studies, by not keeping some focus on the exit strategy, honest evaluation of mission effectiveness may suffer or unintended consequences may arise.

The Vietnam War

The United States involvement in Vietnam was a blatant case of committing forces to execute operations with no clear vision of the military end state.[12] Without it there is also no chance for a coherent exit strategy. The clearest objective U.S. policy-makers set forth was at

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[11] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Operation Planning and Execution System, Volume I, Planning Policies and Procedures Joint Pub 5-03.1, (Washington DC: 31 Dec 1999), A2-1-A2-3.

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best a "vague picture of an independent country free of communism."[13] The initial

deployment of 16,000 military advisors focused on mostly civic actions and intelligence

gathering.[14] This deployment inserted U.S. forces into what was very much a civil war at that

time, with no agreed upon measures of effectiveness for success that would indicate when our

assistance would no longer be needed. The result was a very open ended commitment, with

tremendous focus on the ways and means to win the war and little to no thought of the ends.

With every increase in forces committed it became increasingly difficult for the

United States to extricate from the conflict. Without clearly defined measures of success

General Westmoreland continued to win battles but brought the conflict no nearer to an end.

After the Tet Offensive however, it was the American public who decided the exit strategy.

As support for the war crumbled, the U.S. strategy finally turned toward how to

withdraw from the war,[15] apparently even if our objectives had to be sacrificed. For example,

the agreement to leave North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam was certainly contrary to

the desired military end state in South Vietnam, but desperation led to such agreements

because of the lack of a preplanned set of conditions for U.S. withdrawal and subsequent exit

strategy. The result was essentially an exit strategy negotiated from a position of weakness, if

not dictated by the enemy.

The Persian Gulf War

It can be said that the United States and its coalition partners won the war in the

Persian Gulf in 1991 but lost the peace. This can be derived from the fact that Saddam

Hussein's power base, the Republican Guard forces, is still a very credible regional threat.

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[12] BDM Corporation, A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, (McLean, VA: 1980) vii.
[13] Sam Allotey and others, "Planning and Execution of Conflict Termination," (Montgomery, AL: Air University Press, 1995) 59.
[14] BDM Corporation, 7.

This leverage has also allowed him to maintain the ability to develop weapons of mass destruction unchecked by UN inspectors. The current situation means coalition forces, principally from the United States and Great Britain, must still routinely engage in combat operations over northern and southern Iraq. In addition, thousands of troops are still rotated in and out of this theater to provide the "security and stability" in the region as stated in the Bush administration objectives.[16] However, directly employing precious U.S. resources for over a decade to maintain stability was not born out of a deliberate plan but an inability to translate political objectives into a desired military end state. As a result, the United States is well on the way to making its fight against Iraq the longest commitment to a conflict in its history.

Operational success, especially during the ground war, was so sensational in the Gulf War it caught many strategic and operational leaders off guard. In their elation, national leaders were anxious to terminate the war at the earliest opportunity.[17] This was influenced by the desire to avoid casualties, and the concern for public opinion relating to the 'highway of death." This had a direct impact on the failure to achieve the objective of destroying the Republican Guard.[18] Jeffrey Fondaw suggests that if a coherent conflict termination strategy had been in place that included specific relationships between the military end state and national objectives, General Norman Schwartzkopf could have properly evaluated the situation to determine if that objective had been met.[19] Taking this one step further, focusing on the planned exit strategy, inherently linked to the national and military end state, may have also served to focus operational decision-making and the long range consequences of leaving

[15] BDM Corporation, 62.
[16] Robert R. Saucy and others, "War Termination and Joint Planning, "Joint Forces Quarterly, 1995, 97.
[17] Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, The Generals War (New York: Little, Brown and Company, (1995), 422-423.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Jeffrey E. Fondaw, "Conflict Termination Decisions for the Operational Commander," (U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 2001), 14.

Hussein in control of these forces. By not destroying the bulk of the Republican Guard, the instrument of Saddam Hussein's power, the Coalition has had to accept a considerable presence of western forces in the region to promote stability. This has been an issue of considerable agitation for the Arabs in the region as well as for the United States.[20]

Arguably, having to maintain a large, active, and unplanned force in the region of conflict for such an indefinite period is a symptom of not monitoring the exit strategy, if it was planned at all. In this regard, Operation Desert Storm illustrates how post-hostilities planning must receive the same emphasis as operations, to include the follow through exit strategy.

Bosnia

Military interventions in peacekeeping operations such as in the former Yugoslavia present unique challenges for the United States. In regions where ethnic conflict has been ongoing for hundreds of years it is extremely difficult to implement peace. The root causes of unrest in Bosnia are basically political, economic, and social in nature. Such problems are not brought to a final political solution by military means alone,[21] and definitely impact the exit strategy options.

The planned exit from Bosnia came out of the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, (DPA) which in 1995 created a NATO implementation force under Operation Joint Endeavor that included 20,000 U.S. troops.[22] The mission was to provide a credible deterrent to maintain a secure environment and regional stability by separating warring factions, facilitating elections, and rebuilding the country's infrastructure.[23]   The exit strategy,

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[20] Leon T. Hadar, <u>Quagmire: America in the Middle East,</u> (Cato Institute: Washington DC, 1992) 177-180.
[21] Gilpin, 18.
[22] Ibid., 14.
[23] John G. Roos, A 14 Month Year," <u>Armed Forces Journal International</u>, (July 1996), 4.

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however, was time-oriented rather than objective-based. The stated goal was simply to have all U.S. military personnel out of Bosnia in one year.[24] Such an approach seems to simplify the exit strategy planning process (i.e. negate it), but it marginalizes the reasons for intervening in the first place, and removes any relevance between accomplishing the military or civilian tasks necessary to achieve objectives and the subsequent exit.

The fact that U.S. forces are still playing a critical role in Bosnia six years later demonstrates the limited utility of time-oriented exit strategy. Some rationalizations for such a strategy include prodding the factions involved to focus quickly on resolving issues and accelerate the healing process, rather than having NATO or UN implementation forces (IFOR) bear the brunt of the work. It also attempted to signal that this was not an open-ended commitment and thus required the international community to act promptly as well.[25] But U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke told the UN Security Council in November 2000

> This means that we must be very careful when we talk about exit strategies not to confuse them with exit deadlines...But an exit strategy must be directed towards a defining, overall objective -- not an arbitrary, self-imposed, artificial deadline.[26]

While the military tasks have long since been accomplished to provide an environment in which to carry on the peace process, the civilian tasks have been difficult to accomplish due to social and ethnic mistrust and hatred.[27] Unfortunately, the military forces are tied to enabling the civil aspects of the DPA, which continues to prevent them from leaving Bosnia.

A second problem that arose from the lack of clearly stated objectives was related to strategic planning and coordination. U.S. and NATO planning and coordination procedures

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[24] Ibid., 4.
[25] William T. Johnsen, "U.S. Participation in IFOR: A Marathon Not a Sprint," (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1996), 1.
[26] Richard Holbrooke, "Remarks on UN Peacekeeping." U.S. Embassy, London.
<http://www.usembassy.org.uk/forpo374.html>, [15 November, 2000].

were not well integrated. This inefficiency is also partly responsible for the added costs in manpower and resources in Bosnia.[28] Solid cooperation among civil and military peacekeeping parties at the strategic and operational level can ensure agreement about the political vision and corresponding military operations contributing to the desired end state.[29] It follows that if civil-military planning and coordination are not coherent at the outset, realistic exit strategy planning and execution will also be flawed.

Panama

The U.S. intervention in Panama in 1989 displays a classic disconnect between the planning for hostilities and those geared toward post conflict operations. Although U.S. forces were able to recover in a somewhat timely fashion, the disparity in the planning process created inefficiencies in the use of military forces to accomplish national objectives. In fact, the military forces there found themselves doing tasks of nation building for which they were not prepared.[30]

The first problem was that post-conflict planning was confined to the DOD and did not include interagency coordination. This left out the cultural expertise and contextual knowledge required to plan for the conditions that would follow the end of hostilities. The result was a severe underestimation of what it would take to restore stability to Panama.[31]

Planning was also bifurcated in that XVIII Airborne Corps, as the JTF headquarters, accomplished planning for the forced entry, Operation Just Cause, while planning for the post conflict operations, Operation Blind Logic, was left to the J-5 at Southern Command. To

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[27] Ibid., 32.
[28] Max G. Manwaring, "Peace and Stability Lessons from Bosnia, Parameters, (Winter 1998, V3), 33.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Richard H. Schultz, Jr., "In the Aftermath of War," (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1993), 23.
[31] Ibid., 19.

complicate matters further, at the last minute the J-5 at U.S. Army South in Panama was given the task to execute Blind Logic.[32] The planning staff is not equipped as an operation agency, and was severely handicapped in its mission. As General Thurman himself admitted this went unchecked until serious problems arose because the primary focus was on Just Cause.[33]

This emphasis on the combat execution is evidenced by the frequent rehearsals of Just Cause ordered by General Thurman, while Blind Logic was not rehearsed even once.[34] This led to a lack of understanding as to what the aftermath of hostilities would look like and what types of forces needed to be in place to accomplish post-conflict objectives.

Haiti: A Step in the Right Direction

The U.S. intervention in Haiti in September 1994 provides an example in which an exit strategy is planned as an integral part of the intervention decision from the beginning. It also demonstrates how "the formulation of an exit strategy has its basis in a political decision to intervene."[35] According to Benson and Thrash, Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25), which guided the application of military power as an extension of policy, directed U.S. involvement be "limited, selective and…effective."[36] In addition, since the intervention was under the auspices of the UN, the Security Council resolutions provided the political objectives to be accomplished in Haiti. These called for establishing a stable and secure environment in which the elected government could regain control.[37] U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM) planners had to translate these objectives into attainable goals at the operational and tactical level. Once the operational objectives were accomplished, U.S. forces would be

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[32] Ibid., 26.
[33] Ibid.,27.
[34] Ibid., 23.
[35] McFarland, 18-19.
[36] Kevin C.M. Benson and Christopher B. Thrash, "Declaring Victory: Planning Exit Strategies for Peace Operations," Parameters, (Autumn 1996), 2.
[37] Ibid., 2.

able to leave Haiti. The guidance from the Commander in Chief USACOM and the XVIII

Airborne Corps was a key part of determining these objectives.

Still smarting from Somalia, the U.S. was not willing to commit itself to a long-term

operation in Haiti. Everyone involved in the planning understood that U.S. participation

would be limited, and expeditious termination of the operation and exiting were a very high

priority.[38] This called for exit strategy planning early to ensure the concept of operations

would account for this priority. The Director of the Haiti Task Force at the Office of the

Secretary of Defense, John F. Christiensen, stated that "exit planning started in advance, and

from the beginning we asked how we were going to leave."[39]

With this question well integrated into the planning process, Joint Task Force 190 set

in motion military planning processes outlined in existing guidance. They created a mission

statement, intent, and developed courses of action. The JTF commander provided further

guidance to continue with developing the courses of action and wargaming ensued.[40] Critical

to the success were the specific insights made during the wargaming. A decision matrix

helped them select a course of action that met the criteria established during mission analysis.

The selected course of action was described as a 'time over event strategy,' meaning the

withdrawal of U.S. forces was tied to specific events, such as fielding of Haitian National

Police forces by precinct and the presidential election.[41] The bottom line is that they used a

known planning methodology to successfully determine and execute an exit strategy. This

strategy was directly derived from the intent of the UN Security Council, which authorized

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[38] Strednansky, 35.
[39] Ibid., 36
[40] Benson and Thrash, 3-6.
[41] Ibid., 5.

the intervention.[42]   In addition, the mission kept focused on the stated objectives of providing

a stable environment for the government of Haiti to take control, and left the task of nation

building or establishing democracy to the UN.[43]   Doing so allowed U.S. forces in Haiti to

avoid mission creep and execute a preplanned disengagement.

Discussion of Lessons Learned

Planning an exit strategy is difficult because it involves translating political objectives

into military termination strategy under the influence of political input.[44] If done in concert

with the decision to intervene and the course of action development, it may illuminate

problems of suitability or feasibility in the proposed military action. Addressing the exit

strategy up front ensures honest measures of effectiveness are formulated and forces decision-

makers to think about the end state before forces are committed and at key decision points

thereafter. This was a missed step in the U.S. interventions noted above, especially in

Vietnam. For example, as a minimum, evaluating a proposed exit strategy after two years of

conflict in Vietnam could have forced a choice to escalate or withdraw, either one saving

precious U.S. resources, arguably at no change to the eventual cost.

Desert Storm and Just Cause demonstrate how extremely successful execution of

hostilities is no guarantee of successful military disengagement. Just as planning without a

vision of the end state can lead to inefficient execution of post-hostilities operations,

terminating too hastily could also lead to wasted resources. Examining the exit strategy

beforehand may help evaluate the cessation of hostilities with respect to leveraging your

objectives and ensuring the right types of forces are in place at the end of the fighting.

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[42] Ibid., 3.
[43] Strednansky., 35.
[44] Ibid., 3.

An exit strategy may or may not call for a quick disengagement. Rose points out that there may be some very good reasons to make long term commitments to a region, such as U.S. forces in South Korea or the Sinai Peninsula.[45] But if the political objectives warrant a long-term commitment in a region, the intervention decision must consciously commit, not simply react after the fact. As Rose puts it, "The key question is not how we get out, but why we are getting in."[46] How favorably the exit strategy options relate to U.S. diplomatic interests and military courses of action might provide insight for answers to this question. The U.S. experience in Bosnia and Desert Storm illustrate this point.

Each conflict poses different challenges to planning an operational scheme. In a similar manner, the exit strategy must also be adapted to overcome the unique challenges in that conflict. But no matter the size or intensity of the conflict, the evidence points out that an exit strategy must be formulated as thoroughly as possible, and as soon as possible, in the planning cycle. Tellis says that exit strategies are not integrated well in small and midlevel conflicts because they are out of the public focus and susceptible to diffuse political objectives.[47] This may have some logic, but one could also argue that Haiti and the Persian Gulf experience demonstrate that the opposite could apply. A larger conflict such as Desert Storm may lead policy makers and military planners to believe that simply coercing the enemy through military might will ease the exit problem, allowing it to be put off until near cessation of hostilities, logically flow from the post-conflict phase, or simply take care of itself. Conversely, the low-level peace operation in Haiti made a great effort to integrate exit strategy planning into the operational plan.

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45 Rose, 59.
46 Ibid., 57.
47 Tellis, 145.

Finally, as the conflict in Haiti demonstrates, exit strategy should be integrated into planning from the outset because it is essentially one phase of many in the operational plan. As such, the concepts of operational planning that exist in the joint doctrine can be readily adapted. Since the exit phase is in sequence with other phases of the operation to accomplish the military and political objectives, the success or failure of prior phases will have an impact on the viability of the exit plan. In fact, depending on the weighted importance of the desired exit strategy, it is conceivable that decisions made during earlier phases of a conflict may be based on the impact it could have on the exit plan.

Developing an exit strategy is an uncertain and difficult task at best. Unfortunately, as we have seen from the above examples, it is often given minimal consideration at the beginning of a crisis due to the urgency to act, focus on policy objectives decisions, and the operational planning that must translate the political objectives into military ways and means.[48] Planning for an operation must begin with a clearly defined end state. While planning toward a clearly defined end state is critical, it should go beyond just the conflict termination, and even transition, and follow through with how these affect the military's ability to disengage from the conflict altogether.

Recommendations

Examining the joint doctrine available indicates there is work to be done in defining the concept of exit strategy. If a key term is used it should have a definition in the glossary of the joint publications. There must be a delineation of related ideas such as war termination, post conflict activities, end state, disengagement, and redeployment and how these elements are related in the exit strategy planning. Without a clear definition of the concept, not all planners are working from the same baseline. The working definition in this paper is offered

as a start. That is, *exit strategy is the overarching plan relating conflict termination, post-hostility activities, and military disengagement, which contributes to the strategic objective.*
A thorough discussion of the topic in the Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia, to include how the elements of exit strategy relate, would also be helpful.

Exit strategy planning needs to coincide with where commanders and planners look for guidance on the desired end state or courses of action, not just in post-hostilities planning guidance. This is true in the deliberate planning process, but most critical in crisis action planning (CAP) where time is not a luxury. There are six phases of the CAP process, yet none of them attempt to assess elements of exit strategy as they relate to the course of action planning and execution. [49] This makes course of action planning Phase 3 void of exit strategy considerations. Exit strategy considerations should be brought forward to this phase to take advantage of valuable dialogue between the NCA and the supported commander in chief from this point forward. This change should be reflected in all joint publications, checklists, and diagrams that deal with the CAP process, including all 5-series publications, Joint Pub 3-0, and JOPES.

A simple mechanism for accomplishing this is a feedback loop setup in which a statement or diagram reminds planners in all phases to relate exit strategy planning to the military end state. This would refer them to the appropriate publications for elements such as transition planning and interagency coordination. Without such a tool, exit strategy considerations are contained separate from primary planning documents. The resultant tendency in a crisis may be to delay or segregate exit strategy planning so that the rest of the intervention effort is counter productive to the set of conditions necessary to disengage.

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[48] Gilpin, 2.
[49] Joint Pub 5-00.2, IX-15-IX-39.

In a large-scale conflict this tendency appears to be more problematic. MOOTW and the interagency coordination process are critical to the success of any intervention. Operations in Haiti seem to bear out that if the of the nature intervention is MOOTW, then the planning process is better focused on the doctrinal principles of MOOTW and the interagency process as laid out in their respective joint pubs. In a larger conflict, both these subjects may be relegated to post conflict activities, which means they are often treated distinct from planning for hostilities. One way to help alleviate this problem is to identify and include appropriate interagency representatives in the JTF commander's joint planning group (JPG). This would provide cultural and contextual expertise at the earliest stages of planning, especially for the commander's estimate of the situation. Since this estimate results in the commander's guidance and course of action development, the interagency experts must be fully engaged in the planning at this early juncture.

Conclusion

Unfortunately in the past, exit strategy planning has taken a back seat to vanquishing the enemy. This has had an impact on the achievement of national objectives. While joint guidance calls for early planning of the elements that make up exit strategy, operational planning guidance must be improved in two ways. First, joint doctrine must create a concise definition and discussion of what exit strategy entails, bringing all the elements related to exit strategy together so planning is coherent. Second, exit strategy considerations should be embedded throughout the operational planning and execution process to maintain the attention of commanders and planners. This way the questions concerning what the exit strategy is and how it relates to the concept of operations can be continuously and systematically evaluated

throughout. Otherwise, exit strategy considerations are too easily buried in the dynamics of

planning and executing hostilities.

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